

New York Tribune

Weekly Review of the Arts

The Stage and its People

Sketches by Jefferson MacNamee



Cyril Keightley and Alexandra Carlisle, in "Fools Errant," do a deal of talking about destroying the bad bridges behind them and building great ones ahead.

The Theaters

Is "The Old Soak" Tract or Bacchanale?

By Percy Hammond

THOSE who profess to see in "The Old Soak" a demonstration on behalf of insobriety have not, perhaps, given Mr. Marquis's work the scrutiny it deserves. Honest scholars in such matters, studying the contents of the play, may find that it is, at heart, a lesson in abstinence. The title of "The Old Soak" is apt to mislead the suspicious. It signifies a hero, red-nosed, squalid and fuddled from hard liquor, ennobled in his unsteady habits by the specious processes of the popular drama. The Old Soak, however, is not that sort of inebriate. His dissipation is genial and quiet, born of a friendly, whole-souled admiration for alcohol rather than a mad passion for it. He staggers but once in the comedy and never is he so drenched that he curses or hiccoughs. The songs inspired by his potations are not the ribald doxologies of the debauchee, but such optimistic anthems as "It's Always Fair Weather" and "Rock of Ages." He seems to be asking:

What harm in drinking can there be
Since hootch and life so well agree?

He quotes from the Good Book, though with such whimsical, inaccuracy as "Hell is paved with good inventions." He does not beat the Little Woman, nor is he ever brought home to her so incapacitated that he cannot walk. True, he will not work, and he shoots dice and plays poker with the ne'er-do-wells at the tavern. One of his cronies is Al, the ex-bar-keep, the most engaging of the bootleggers; and you may feel that it was a social error for the Old Soak to entertain Al and Nelly, the cook, at a drinking party in the dining room. He is rather heartless, too, about the pet parrot that dies from overindulgence in Al's experiments in moonshine. And when he improvises a bar on the mantelpiece and gives reminiscences of the halcyon days of

The long Brass Rail above the Sawdust Floor,
The gay Hot Dog, the gleaming Cuspidore,

you may suspect that the Old Soak is too much of a "gem of iniquity" to be sanctified by a happy ending in a play.

But while sincere in his affection for strong drink, the Old Soak is wise enough to repudiate it as indispensable in a crisis. When it is time for him to save his wife from heartbreak and his son from Sing Sing, he excludes intoxicants and confronts the dilemma with the clear eye and keen wit of abstinence. He has no load aboard when he visits the malevolent banker and deprives him of the needed \$10,000. Here, then, is Mr. Marquis's sermon on the advantages of teetotalism, if you care to take it that way.

Though he may pretend that his play is a bacchanale, it really is a tract. The Old Soak, discarding his bottle, has more fun in putting down the skintint than he has in putting down liquor. He outthinks, outtalks and outmaneuvers his adversary, and has great sport in the encounter. His conduct throughout this shrewd and most humorously contrived episode is admirable; if you except the old trick, wherein he threatens to shoot the moneylender and then discloses that his weapon is only a patent cigar lighter. This testimony that "The Old Soak" is propaganda against alcohol may, of course, be weakened a trifle by the fact that Cousin Webster, who loses the \$10,000, also is sober.

Whether "The Old Soak" is an advocate for or against the use of spirits as a recreation, it is a good show. Mr. Marquis has craftily and with intelligence manipulated a gimcrack plot into a keen and not incredible comedy, with fewer concessions to the nursery than anything of its type. He is, at least, the A. A. Milne of the hootch drama. That "Tag," with Nelly, the cook, whispering "Al's here!" is a little masterpiece of comedy-engineering. Mr. Beresford's impersonation of the Old Soak is a prudent picture of likable worthlessness and conviviality; and his realization in the third act, of the trouble he has caused is indicated in a fine bit of unobtrusive pathos. He is not truer than Miss Minnie Dupree as the Old Soak's enduring wife.

Every Man in His Own Humor

An Amateur Season
Dear Sir: With the idea of developing the pent-up ambition of New York's teeming amateur ability in the direction of acting, dancing and singing and for purpose of social interchange, a group of professional, semi-professional and frankly amateur players and artists, both in and out of Greenwich Village, have formed the Society of Village Cut-ups. They invite young men and women of good standing and definite aspirations to

join. Details may be learned by addressing Henry White, 213 West Forty-second Street.

It is feasible to elevate the stage with laughter, and theater art need not be morbid or gloomy to be genuine. Several professional writers, composers and decorative artists have already volunteered their services and material. It is planned to give a full season of widely varying productions, commencing in September.

A CHARTER MEMBER.



Some impressions of the audience at "The Old Soak," gained from our seat behind a post which held the last row against the rear rail. Below—Eva Williams, as Nelly, the hired girl, who tested home brew on the parrot until it died of d. t's.



When Don Marquis, author of "The Old Soak," made the speech he said he wrote before he wrote the play, he appeared to feel as we have caricatured him. Below, in circle—Mary Phillips, as Ina Heath, the cabaret dancer, for whom Clem Hawley Jr. "steals the papers." On the couch—Harry Beresford, as the Old Soak, who says his will power won't let him leave the stuff alone.



The Old Soak said if he were rich he'd own a ship and stock her brimful of likker and sell and sail and sail, and he'd cork up a note in every "empty" telling what he thought of the Eighteenth Amendment and set it adrift on the seas. Below—Al, the Old Soak's favorite ex-bartender.



London Stage

By Warre B. Wells

LONDON, Aug. 11.—The stagnant pool of the dramatic season, with half a score of the London theaters closed, has been stirred by the staging of A. S. M. Hutchinson's best seller, "If Winter Comes," in an adaptation by B. MacDonald Hastings. It has been tried out first at Margate, a popular resort on the Kent coast, and is to be taken on provincial tour before it makes London in the fall. Probably no production outside of London ever has attracted so much attention. "If Winter Comes" was an extraordinarily successful novel, but whether it was the kind of novel that lent itself to turning into a successful play was another question, which dramatic critics made wholesale pilgrimage to Margate to answer.

They have brought back a very uncertain answer. There is a clear-cut division of opinion among the most competent critics whether the play is good or bad; nobody compromises on finding it just indifferent. The book had its dramatic scenes, but its chief interest lay in the character of Mark Sabre. Again, it was a longish novel, with a mass of incident and covering a considerable period of time in its action. The adapter, perhaps necessarily, has taken a good deal of liberty with the story, particularly with its lay-out. He has succeeded in working in the main incidents of the novel and in using with some skill much of Hutchinson's dialogue.

The play opens with a war-time tea-party at Sabre's house at which all the characters are introduced. Thus, with some violence to the treatment of the novel, Lady Tybar is discovered as a guest in the house. Then Sabre comes home on his first leave to find Effie Bright installed as companion to his wife. Fourteen months later he is again at home, crippled and discharged, and here comes the greatest divergence from the book, with Effie, who had been discharged a year ago, returning with her baby, Sabre insisting that she be given shelter and his indignant wife leaving him with her. Three months later Effie overhears both Sabre's dismissal from his firm and the news that his wife has eloped

New Theatrical Offerings

MONDAY—At the Globe Theater George White will present "George White's Scandals," the fourth of the series started in 1919. Mr. White, Andy Rice and W. C. Fields wrote the sketches and dialogues. Buddy de Silva and E. Ray Goetz the lyrics, and George Gershwin the music. Paul Whiteman and his Palala Royal Orchestra, W. C. Fields, Lester Allen, the Lighter Girls and Alexander, Franklin Ardell, Jack McGowan, Pearl Regay, Colleta Ryan, Richard Bold, the Piano Trio, Charley Wilkens, Argentine Dancers, Temple Quartet, Olive Vaughn, Edna May Reed, Peggy Dolan, Myra Cullen, Helen LeVonne, Diana Gordon, George White and others are in the cast.

TUESDAY—At the Comedy Theater George Broadhurst will present "I Will if You Will," described as "a perfectly innocent comedy" by Crane Wilbur. Edmund Lowe, Rapley Holmes, William Roselle, Walter Walker, Leslie Hunt, Louis D'Arcy, Ford Chester, Walden Trimble, Lilyan Tashman, Leila Frost and Beatrice Nichols are in the cast.

WEDNESDAY—At the Hudson Theater George M. Cohan will make his first production of the season, offering "So This Is London," an English-American comedy by Arthur Goodrich. In the cast are Lawrence D'Orsay, Edmund Breese, John L. Shine, Donald Gallagher, Lily Cahill, Leah Winslow, Marion Gray and Marie Carroll.

At the Liberty Theater Moore and Wexley will present their first New York production, "Molly Darling," a musical comedy by Otto Harbach and William Cary Duncan, with music by Tom Johnston and lyrics by Phil Cook. Jack Donahue is the leading comedian and Mary Milburn has the title rôle. Others are Hal Forde, Emma Janvier, Clarence Nordstrom, Jay Gould, Catherine Mulqueen, Billy and Billie Taylor, Burke Western, Ben Benny and Nina Penn.

THURSDAY—At the Frazee Theater H. H. Frazee will present William Cournay in "Her Temporary Husband," a farcical comedy by Edward A. Paulton. Ann Andrews, George Parson, Henry Mortimer, Selena Royle and Harry R. Allen are in the supporting cast.

SATURDAY—At the Hippodrome Charles Dillingham will offer "Better Times," his eighth annual production at the big playhouse. R. H. Burnside conceived and staged the spectacle and Raymond Hubbell provided the musical settings. Eleven countries are represented in the personnel of "Better Times." The production will have a large singing ensemble and Elna Hansen will head a ballet of 300. Orlando's horses, Vasco, the Ginnett family, Long Tack Sam and his Chinese jugglers and acrobats, Torbay, Patrick and Francisco, Clemenceau Brothers, Merian's cats and dogs, Power's elephants, the Three Bobs and Jocko, the crew; George Herman, Claudius and Scarlet, the Berlo Sisters and Marceline, the clown, are among the features which will be seen.

with Major Millet—the latter (Sabre's "Hopscotch") being made into an important character, whose love-making with Mabel Sabre wholly alters the novel's idea of her hard and very respectable nature. The inquest scene at which Sabre is censured as the cause of Effie's death follows the course of the book, and is succeeded by melodramatic incidents at the offices of Fortune & Twining. Finally, after Sabre has burned Effie's confession, the curtain falls on his embrace with Lady Tybar. She has compelled Fortune Twining, by threat of refusing to renew their lease, to take back Sabre as a partner, though that he should be ready to work with them again is surely quite inconsistent with his character as revealed in the book. The fact is that the character drawing of Sabre, on which the book essentially depends, is swamped in the play by the incidents of his wife's love for Hopscotch Millet, the war atmosphere and the dramatic scene of the inquest. The character of Sabre, played adequately so far as the part

gops by Owen Nares, is indeed sketchy in the extreme. So also is that of Nona Tybar, and the rather fine and subtle love interest between these two is made somewhat obvious and commonplace. Nona was played by Mary Polini, Sabre's wife by Grace Lane and Effie by Helen Spencer. All of them made the best of their material, but much of the delicacy and sensitiveness of Hutchinson's treatment had disappeared in the process of dramatization.

Only one of the critics had not read the book before seeing the play—or at least only one had the nerve to confess the fact. His opinion is, perhaps, the most valuable, as he was thus able to judge the play as a play and not on the ground of its relative merits. He sums it up as "a simple melodramatic theme," which "starts off with a comfortably assured prosperity." Conceding that it would have been better to have seen the play without having read the book, E. A. Baughan says that "the play aroused genuine enthusiasm, and there's no reason why it should not. It contains the much-worn situations of the stage. Everybody acts in precisely the way they would not act in real life." He is doubtful whether it would be suitable for a West End theater, except, perhaps, the Lyceum (the traditional home of melodrama), on the ground that the writing, characterization and construction are too crude. The critics mostly are agreed that in the hands of the adapter Hutefferson it has been turned into something like melodrama, but by no means all agree that it is good melodrama. "Once it comes to London," says one tersely, "I doubt if it will last till winter comes."

In the mean time, light fare is the rule in London. This month's new productions include a light comedy, a farcical comedy, a French farce and a revue. "Husbands Are a Problem," the light comedy by Harris Deans, with which the Ambassadors Theater has reopened, has plenty of wit and epigram, but little plot to hold it together. On the other hand, the French farce, "Zozo," staged at the Little Theater, to begin the joint management of Jose G. Levy and Captain Aaronsohn, has plenty of plot and situation, with indifferent dialogue. "The Limpet," by Vernon Woodhouse and Victor MacClure, staged at the Kingsway Theater, scarcely lives up to its description as a "farcical" comedy.



Not a pre-season study of a Princeton freshman, home for the holidays, but Frits Williams, in "Fools Errant," all dressed up to go to Duluth, Minn. The play gives many valuable hints as to what the well-dressed man shall wear in the matter of coonskins.

The Playbill

A Bulletin of Who's Who and What's What

JOHN BARRYMORE, it may now be definitely announced, is to return to the speaking stage this season. When ETHEL BARRYMORE joined her brothers, Lionel and John, recently, under the management of ARTHUR HOPKINS, speculation started. The appearance of all three in "Othello" was suggested. But now that Ethel has begun rehearsals in HAUPTMANN'S "Rose Bernd" and Lionel is to appear later in the season in O'NEILL'S "The Fountain," John will have the stage to himself. He is to be seen in a Shakespearean production. His last appearance under the management of Mr. Hopkins, it will be remembered, was in "Richard III," which had to close when seats were selling weeks

in advance because of the star's breakdown. "Hamlet," kept that in mind when definite announcement comes from the producer, and see how close it comes to the mark. It is a mighty good bet! . . . It is reported along Broadway that HENRY MILLER is to stage two plays for A. H. WOODS. Following his opening in BATAILLE'S "La Tendresse" at the Empire on September 25, Mr. Miller is to assume charge of rehearsals of Bataille's "A Child of Love," the story goes. Then he is to take up the work of preparing "The Wedding March" for production. . . . Word comes from San Francisco that FAY BAINTER has arranged with OLIVER MOROSCO to appear in his production of THOMPSON BUCHANAN'S "The Sporting Thing to Do." WILLIAM HARRIS JR. it was understood, was to present Miss Bainter in a new play this season. . . . Although FRANCINE LARIMORE is to tour in "Nice People," beginning in Boston in October, she is to have a new play later in the season. . . . Those supporting ROLAND YOUNG and LAURA HOPE CREWS in CLARE KUMMER'S "Pomero's Past," which is now in rehearsal, are MARJORIE KUMMER, RYE DERBY, CECIL YAPP, MONTAGU RUTHERFORD, HARRY C. BANNISTER, RUTH FINDLAY and RICHARD STERLING. SAM FORREST is in charge of rehearsals for SAM HARRIS. . . . At last JANE COWL has chosen the play in which she will appear this season. Whether it is one from her own pen or one by another author both she and the SELWYNS decline to disclose for the present. Recently it was announced that the choice had narrowed down to two, one of the plays being her own. . . . LOUIS CALVERT is again to play Baron Regnard in "He Who Gets Slapped," at the Garrick, rejoining the cast to-morrow night. Mr. Calvert created the role here in the ANDREYEV play, which he left to appear in ARNOLD BENNETT'S "What the Public Wants." IRVING BERLIN'S "Music Box Revue" will be seen for the 400th time on Wednesday night. The production intact, its sponsors declare, will open at the Forrest Theater in Philadelphia on the evening of October 2. . . . W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM'S melodrama, "East of Suez," opens at the Woods Theater, Atlantic City, to-night. . . . ROLAND WEST'S mystery play, "The Black Adventure," opens to-morrow night at the Broadway Theater, Long Branch, with LOIS BOLTON and JOHN WESTLEY among the leading players. . . . The "Greenwich Village Follies," which will open at the Shubert Theater, New Haven, on Labor Day, will come to the Shubert Theater here on Tuesday evening, September 12. . . . With LYNN FONTANNE again in the title rôle, "Dulcy" will open at the Savoy Theater, Asbury Park, on Monday, September 4. . . .

H. H. FRAZEE is to present "Strut Miss Lizzie," which closed at the Earl Carroll Theater yesterday, at the Auditorium in Chicago on Sunday night, September 3. He plans to enlarge both the cast and the orchestra which will travel with the production. First nighters will have to maintain a rapid pace to keep up with the opening, with eight scheduled for this week, at least five next, and even more the week beyond. . . . JULIAN ELTINGE has left the Buffalo hospital where he was recuperating following an operation, and will begin rehearsals here in "The Elusive Lady" in about two weeks. . . . "Thank-U," "The Rubicon" and ED WYNN in "The Perfect Fool" open in Chicago to-night, and "Good Morning, Dearie," direct from its long run at the Globe Theater here, opens in the Windy City to-morrow night. . . . You may find it hard to believe that DAVID BELASCO is going to produce "The Merchant of Venice." But just the same MARY SERVOS is reported as going into rehearsal as Portia to DAVID WARFIELD'S Shylock. Also a number of expensive costumes have been ordered.

"Six Characters in Search of an Author," by the Italian LUIGI PIRANDELLO, the stunt play which BROCK PEMBERTON will offer here later in the season, is to be presented in Munich by REINHARDT and in Paris by PITOEFF. Mr. Pemberton saw the play in London when it was staged by KOMMISSARZHEVSKY for the Stage Society of London at the Kingsway Theater. The adaptation by EDWARD STORER is to be used here. Storer's letter to the American producer told of the forthcoming European productions of the play. Pirandello is to come to America, probably, when his play is presented.

"Lonely Wives" seems certainly to be a lonely play, wandering up and down, casting longing eyes at a New York Theater. A. H. WOODS made frequent changes in the date for the farce's premiere in New York, finally deciding not to bring it in at all for the present. In fact, instead of resting on Broadway, it is to be in Baltimore this week. The story is that the play needs a good deal more work and some changes in the cast before it will be in shape for a New York audience.

ULA SHARON, premier dancer of the "Greenwich Village Follies," is to have a costume made from the same cloth woven for Mlle. Genee fifteen years ago. RICHARD R. RICHARDS is responsible for the truth of this tale. Fifteen years Mlle. Genee had special cloth woven for a costume she had made. Miss Sharon desired to duplicate Mlle. Genee's costume. She visited a store and voiced her desire for a duplication of the costume. The

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